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The Healing of Christ In His Church

JAMES MOORE HICKSON

Author of
The Revival of the
Gifts of Healing



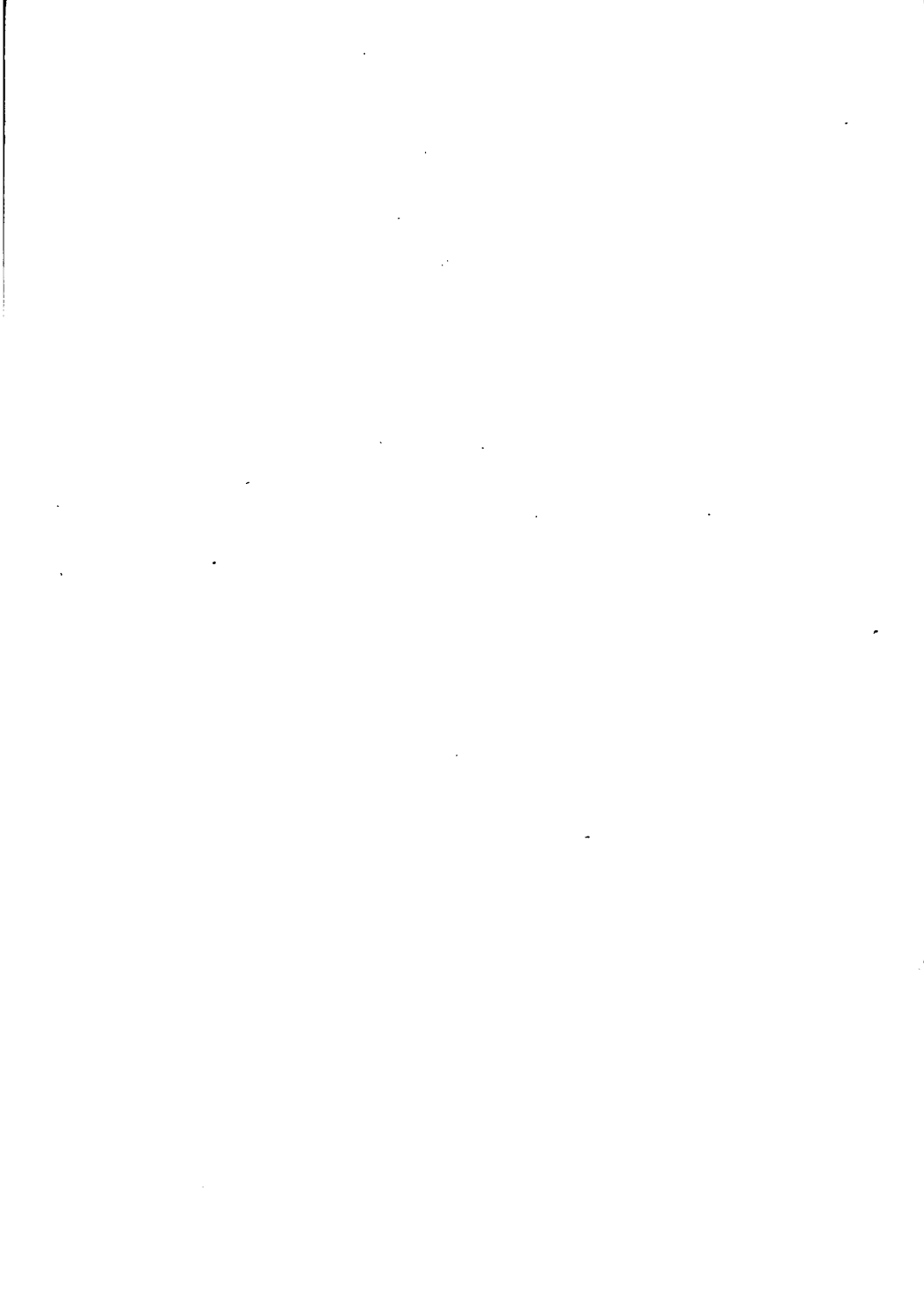
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INTRODUCTION

It is apparent on all sides that there is a gradual awakening in many hearts to the truth of the Healing Presence of Christ in His Church. Many are seeking the truth and longing for healing, and those who are seeking it in Christ Himself, who is the Truth, are finding the fulfilment of God's promises: "Seek and ye shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you." "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." I believe that God has much to teach us in the life of His Son Jesus Christ, and in the truth of His Presence in our midst, and this little book is sent out, with the consciousness of many imperfections and shortcomings, yet with the earnest desire that with God's blessing it may bring to the Church a helpful message of the Healing Presence of Christ. It is my great desire to see the Church, under the guidance of her Bishops, carrying on once more this part of her mission as the instrument of our Lord's Ministry of Healing, and I feel the great importance of the first steps. There are many rays of truth presented to the world at the present time, and the tendency is to accept this way or that as the whole truth. The whole truth is in Christ alone. He who is Truth and Light of Light gathers up all rays of light and truth in Himself, for all come from Him and all lead back to Him.



INTRODUCTION

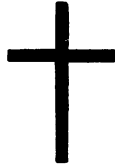
If the Church will approach this subject from the spiritual side, she will find in Christ the source of all healing, and as the Church yields herself in renewed faith to Him, as His minister to a sick and suffering world, He will stretch out through her ministries a Loving Hand to save, and many a poor soul "whom Satan hath bound," and whom the Church seems at present powerless to help, will be sought by the Good Shepherd until He find it, and laid on His shoulder rejoicing. If the Church, waiting upon God, will go forward in faith, taking each step as it is revealed, she need not fear the dangers that surround her, for Christ Himself is the Way.

This little book is offered to God as a humble and all unworthy thank-offering for all His love; and for the revelation of His Healing Presence, and for the healing He has brought to many burdened lives.

I pray that God's blessing may rest upon it, and upon all the Church's Ministry of Healing, and that this message may be blessed to every heart to which it comes.

J. M. H.

SPIRITUAL HEALING



We must understand that under the term "Spiritual Healing" are included differentiated powers.

There is first prayer, which is the vital breath of this work, as of all Christian life. Prayer is the turning of the heart's desire to God and the opening of our hearts to receive that for which we ask. Faith is the acceptance of God's promises and of His will as He has revealed Himself to us in our Lord Jesus Christ. We must not be content with the wavering, uncertain faith that says: "If it be God's Will He will heal me," but we must by the help of the Holy Spirit follow on to know the Lord, and know from our Lord's revelation of Himself that it is His Will to heal, and that the means He has appointed cannot fail of their effect. Faith is also the certainty that: "If we ask anything according to His Will He heareth us, and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 St. John v. 14, 15). In prayer we are co-operating with God, for when our will is yielded to Him, the Holy Spirit prays with-

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in us, making intercession for the saints according to the Will of God with groanings that cannot be uttered. Our Lord shows the standard to which our faith in prayer needs uplifting in the words: "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye have received them (R. V.) and ye shall have them" (St. Mark xi. 24). This is prayer in union with God; the very petition has been inspired by God, that our desire to receive may meet His desire to give; and that prayer can never fall to the ground. It is offered to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ, and we know that He has heard us and that our prayer is granted. We may not see how the answer is coming, but faith rests in God and waits patiently in Him without an anxious thought or doubt, for He is directing all things towards the fulfilment of His Will, and will guide us in our co-operation with Him until the work is accomplished.

The soul which prays in faith, with the concentrated earnestness denoted by our Lord's parable of the importunate widow, cannot come away without receiving the communication of healing power, though he is perfectly content to know that the answer will not always be given according to the limitations of his desire, but rather with the fulness of love and knowledge and power which the Lord uses in His relation to us.

Our Lord has told us that: "If two of you

shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (St. Matt. xviii. 19), and these words are followed by the promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name there am I in the midst of them" (St. Matt. xviii. 20). So mutual intercession and gatherings for intercessory prayer, looking to Christ, Who is present in our midst, are also means by which we are seeking healing from God for ourselves and others.

Then there is the Holy Communion, in which we spiritually receive the Body and Blood of Christ; this is our great help in spiritual healing, for it is the means our Lord Himself has appointed to communicate His life to us. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, ye have not life in you" (St. John vi. 53).

The Prayer Book teaches us to approach these sacred mysteries with our whole being receptive to God, and the need of such receptivity ought to be more deeply realized. We come to Christ "that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His Body, and our souls washed by His most precious Blood." Christ comes to our whole being: "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life."

Then comes the thankful acknowledgment that we are Christ's and must glorify Him in

our bodies and our spirits: "Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies."

It follows that if we would aim at receiving our Lord in the fulness in which He wills to come to us, the gates of spirit, soul and body must be open wide that the King of Glory may come in.

Persons of great faith have been known to receive healing of their diseases directly from Christ in the Holy Communion.*

If we all would respond to God's desire to fill our whole being by an earnest desire for Him—"My soul is athirst for Thee: my flesh also longeth after Thee"—this would become the desire, not of our Communion only, but of our whole life, and not for ourselves only, but for others. Consider what the result would be if the faith and prayer of this generation would consecrate to God the generation that is coming, seeking to yield to the inflowing life of God the bodies, souls and spirits

* Two striking passages from the experiences of Father John, of Russia, bear witness to this fact:—

"I marvel at the greatness and life-giving properties of the Holy Sacrament. An old woman who was spitting blood and who had lost all strength, being unable to eat anything, after the administration of the Holy Sacrament, which I administered to her, began to recover the same day from her illness."

"A young girl who was almost dying, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament began to revive the same day from her illness; began to eat, drink and speak, while before this she was almost in a state of unconsciousness, violently tossed about, and could neither eat nor drink anything. Glory to Thy life-giving and terrible mysteries, O Lord." ["My Life in Christ," p. 292.]

of the children growing up around us. We can scarcely over-estimate the benefit to humanity that would follow from attaining to this fuller measure of what the Christian life should be: God would be working among us, not only restoring the individual to wholeness, but radiating His Life from one to another in unconscious influence, for the uplifting of the general health of the community.

Although God grants our requests for healing in answer to prayer and united intercession and through the Holy Communion, and although some are able to receive healing directly through these means, yet God has ordained special means by which He imparts healing to us, and in obedience to Him and guided by His Word we receive these means, bringing into them the indispensable forces of the Christian life which we have been considering.

Frequently in the Early Church, less frequently through the Christian ages, and in considerable frequency at the present time, the Holy Spirit's gift of healing has been bestowed. Those whom God has called to be channels of His healing power are conscious of a force within them, which may be transmitted to others with curative effect. This gift must be given back to God, Who gave it, and consecrated to His service; then it becomes sacramental, and must only be used with deepest reverence and humility and with

prayer, for God is then working in us and through the channel of our being to heal the sick. The fact of such gifts cannot be doubted. When consecrated to God the power becomes in nature like to that exercised by our Lord, and when thus used in conjunction with other spiritual means it becomes one with the healing power of Christ.*

It is of the "gift of healing" thus used that I now go on to speak.

I should like to point out that healing by the laying on of hands is a distinct gift. In 1 Cor. xii. 30, St. Paul asks: "Have all the gifts of healing?" In the same chapter he answers his own question thus: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit . . . and there are differences of administrations, but the same God . . . the manifestations, of the Spirit is given to every man . . . to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom . . . to another faith . . . to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit . . . to another discerning of spirits, . . . all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

Sometimes it is asked, How is it that there are so few healers? and why is the healing touch so seldom used? Chiefly because, having lost faith in that touch, it is lying dormant

* If the natural gift, which God has bestowed as the instrument of the spiritual, be not consecrated, and no spiritual power be brought into it, it will work only on the physical plane as animal magnetism, and the work will fall far short of what God would have it be.

and unused in the majority of people to whom it has been given. Also, some who feel they have this power within them, are held back from exercising it by timidity and the fear of appearing presumptuous.

This leads to a further question: How can this power be recognised and developed by those to whom it is given?

The first step, of course, is to realise the responsibility of possessing the gift. Then to open the mind to teaching on the subject, both from within and without, and taking the gift back to God from Whom it came, to consecrate it, as we have said, to His Service. It will then be found almost impossible to resist the impulse to lay the hands on the sick.

In speaking of spiritual healing, we must always keep this truth clearly before us, that in all such healing, from the works that our Lord did in the days of His Flesh, to the works that He is doing among us now, there is One and only One Healer, and that is Christ Himself. We must realise this, for Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the Way, the Truth, and the Life of spiritual healing. Christ alone is the Healer; this is all His own Ministry, and those whom He calls to carry on His work are only channels through which He is working, and through which His power flows. Then, because this is Christ's work, it can have no limitations on His side. What man is able to receive is the only limitation to what Christ is

able to give, and for the same reason the healing now, as in the days of His earthly ministry, is not for the body only, but for the whole trinity of man's being, spirit, soul and body.

There are two points on which I want to speak, and to show how the Church differs from the teaching of Christian Science.

First, I want to show that in Christian healing in our Lord's Name we see Life proceeding from God and coming down to man, and acting upon the life which He has put in man, quickening it and imparting to the sufferer that new influx of life of which he is in need. It is a power from without, coming to quicken that which is within. I think the Bible teaches this principle very clearly. Christ says in reference to His gift of God the Holy Ghost, given to man: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink" (St. John vii. 37). "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest" (St. Matt. xi. 28), and again: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (St. John x. 10). He gives out healing by His touch or His word of power, and the sick receive it from Him. We are told that "Power came forth from Him and healed them all" (St. Luke vi. 19). When He is touched with the touch of faith He perceives that virtue has gone out of Him (St. Luke viii. 46). That is a faithful witness to the outflowing power of Christ. And here another truth unfolds it-

self before us: that not only does the healing power come down from God to man, but it comes through one and only one channel, and that is through the *Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

Our Lord has said: "As the Father hath life in Himself even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself" (St. John v. 26). The truth of the Incarnation is the very essence of Christianity and of Christ's ministry of healing. Man had fallen, and because sin was in the world, pain and disease were in the world as its results, and nothing but God's pardon and healing could uplift humanity to the perfect soundness which is God's ideal for man. How did that pardon and healing come? God could find in fallen man no instrument attuned to receive what humanity so sorely needed, and so the Son of God became Incarnate. He took upon Him our flesh, He took human nature in its purest form, matter as well as soul into the Godhead, but do we realise all that this means to us? As the Son of God, He has life in Himself, and as man, that life, by the Father's will, fills His human Body. The Transfiguration is a brief vision of the life and glory of God permeating His human form. We see this flowing out to the sick as a wonderful power of healing and we know that the Incarnation means this to us: that because the Son of God has come in the flesh, God has come to this plane of our crea-

tion and that henceforth God's healing power can work in the redeemed material, God's own possession, as well as the spiritual part of man's nature wherever and whenever man is open to receive it, and that this is what we need to uplift us from weakness or disease to perfect soundness.

The truth of the Incarnation is the rock on which our Lord's ministry of healing is founded, and we must remember that only that "spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (1 St. John iv. 3).

As Christ gave out life and healing in the days of His visible Presence among men so He continues His ministry now, and He has promised that His faithful followers will do "greater works . . . because I go to My Father" (St. John xiv. 12). He is the Lord of life, and it is through the glorified humanity of our ascended Lord that the streams of life come to our whole being. He is the very centre of healing, and the life flowing out from Him will quicken the feeble vitality of the sufferer, and give the greater measure of life that is needed to cleanse that which is diseased, or to bring back due adjustment and control and to restore him to perfect health.

It is not said of any but the Perfect Man, the Son of God, that He was *Life in Himself*; those whom Christ calls to carry on His work are only channels of His power. "If any man

thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me . . . out of him shall flow rivers of living waters" (St. John vii. 37-38).

I think that when the Christian Scientists affirm that they are by nature perfect in soul and body, they ignore the redeeming work of our Lord, and this outflowing Power of God for our development. They say that God made us perfect and that we have remained so. We, on the other hand, believe that humanity has fallen, that sin and suffering are in the world; but we believe that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; that in Him we are born again, that through Him we receive pardon and healing, and that by His continual grace we are being developed, until the bud of perfection, which is our life in Christ, will blossom into the perfect flower.

The second point is this: Whereas Christian Science denies the existence of sin, sickness and disease, looking upon them simply as illusions, which Christian Scientists try to dispel by a denial of their existence, we admit them to the full, as our Lord and His disciples did, and, with God's help, try to overcome them. Christ has overcome the world, and His message to us is: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things."

We have thus brought out three truths which we should keep clearly in our minds:

1. That healing is the life of God, coming

from Him to quicken the life which He has breathed into man.

2. That the healing power comes to man through the Incarnation of the Son of God.

3. That Christ Himself is the Healer, for it was through His human nature on earth, and it is through His glorified humanity now, that we receive his healing power.

We come now to our Lord's earthly ministry, and as we study His life, this great truth stands out before us, that Christ has revealed Himself as the Saviour, not of the spirit only, but of the whole of man's being, spirit, soul and body.

The prophecies of the coming of Christ foretold that He should be the Saviour of the body as well as of the soul and spirit, and that He should come "with healing in His Wings" (Mal. iv. 2). "Behold your God . . . He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isaiah xxxv. 4-6). These words are literally fulfilled in Christ. There is no reason to rob them of their literal significance. It was in the fulfilment of these prophecies that He revealed Himself as the promised Emmanuel, as He clearly showed in His answer to the disciples of St. John the Baptist: "Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk,

the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached" (St. Luke vii. 22). Our Lord takes Isaiah's prophecy as the summary of His mission and His message to the world. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Isaiah lxi. 1; St. Luke iv. 18).

The mission of our Lord upon the earth was the salvation of the entire being of man. He worked on each plane of man's being according to the need of the sufferer. The woman who wept at His feet, and whose spirit was bruised and broken by sin, He pardoned and blessed. To the man, dwelling among the tombs, whose mind was darkened and chained, He gave freedom and light; and those whose bodies were afflicted with disease or racked with pain, He touched into life and health.

Now we affirm that the revelation of our Lord as the "Saviour of the body" cannot be for the period of His earthly ministry alone, for Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today and for ever," and what He brought to humanity by His Incarnation and His work of redemption is for all time and for every nation. We can come to Him as our Healer, and our Good Physician now, as we should have come in the days of His visible Presence

on the earth. Our Lord's will for the continuance of His ministry of healing is shown by this consideration, that He instituted the Church to carry on His work.

We must remember that our Lord, as man, under man's conditions, was ministering to those around Him in a sphere bounded by the human limitations of time and place. But by His atonement and by His ascension and the coming of the Holy Ghost, the sphere of His ministry has become, in its possibilities, wide as the human race. And in this wide sphere Christ has placed His Church, as the appointed channel through which His ministry shall be continued. Is it, we ask, His will to continue through the Church His ministry of healing? And we find that He has given to the Church the direct command and the power to carry on His work. When He first sent out His twelve Apostles, He gave them power and authority over all devils and to cure disease. He sent them to preach the gospel and to heal the sick (St. Luke ix. 2). "As ye go, preach . . . heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (St. Matt. x. 7-8). When He sent the seventy it was with the same charge: "Into whatsoever city ye enter . . . heal the sick that are therein" (St. Luke x. 8-9). The same charge was given to the eleven before our Lord's ascension. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature . . . and these signs shall

follow them that believe . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (St. Mark xvi. 15-18).*

This is Christ's charge to His Church, and the Church can only respond by her deep realisation of our Lord's Presence among us. Christ has said: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," and the living Presence of Christ is the very life of the Church. What does His Presence mean? Can we realise that to us the Son of God, Life of Life, has come down to earth and taken our nature upon Him, and that to us through His Incarnation, life and healing flow out from Him to our whole being. That for us He has ascended into heaven, that by the coming of the Holy Ghost He may fill all things and embrace all humanity; and then that He, the very centre of healing, is with us now, and saying: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will refresh you." The charge of Christ to His Church is great, but the power of the Presence of Christ in His Church is more than commensurate with it.

I believe that our Lord is coming very near to His people at this present time, and that we may thankfully and reverently be waiting to receive Him.

* If the authenticity of this passage be disputed, it gives, at any rate, a very early view of our Lord's commission to His ministry, and the results of healing by the laying on of hands bear witness to the living truth of the words.

It is my humble and solemn conviction that the awakening to the truth of the spiritual healing which is being manifested not only all around us here but also in isolated and distant countries at this time — that this awakening is the call of Christ the Bridegroom to His Bride the Church; and it is a most wonderful manifestation of His love. Christ is revealing Himself to the Church as our Healer and the source of all healing, present in our midst, and our eyes must be turned towards Him and our hearts uplifted to Him and when the signs of His healing presence are evidenced and men are filled with wonder and questioning, we must see that we do not let anything cloud the vision of Christ as the Healer. Those whom Christ calls to be channels of His healing need to be filled with the pure longing for Christ to reveal Himself to all who receive His healing through their ministrations, that no shadow of self in the human agent may come between the sick and Christ.

I believe also that the Holy Spirit is working mightily among us to wake in men's hearts the response to Christ's call. Do we not see on all sides hearts opening to the truth of Christ's healing, and if we see men being drawn near to Christ, is it not because Christ is drawing near to us? "No man can come to Me except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him."

Our Lord's Presence is very real in this

work, and the results of healing in answer to the laying on of hands with prayer are indeed signs of His Presence. The truth that our Lord's healing is not for the body only, but for the entire being of a man, is being proved to me constantly by the fact that He is drawing nearer to Himself many poor souls, with all kinds of troubles, not physical only, but mental and spiritual also. They come to Christ with their burdens, and lay bare their hearts to Him. Some are troubled by evil spirits, some weighted down with sin, and the sin must be confessed to God, and if there is malice or hatred or unforgiveness, it must be taken away before the body can receive healing. This work is embracing not only the work of the doctor, but of the priest. It is the priest's office to receive these burdened souls, and to prepare them for healing, and I reverently ask the Church's aid now for these poor souls who are gathering around me. How great an opportunity the Church has, and will have, in this work! There is no need to fear that we are seeking physical health and neglecting the life of the soul in spiritual healing, for Christ has perfect soundness to give us, and lays His Hand in healing on the troubled spirit and the sin-stained soul. The power which is drawing these souls is the power of the Presence of Christ, and if in every church and every home and every place we could realise Christ's Presence more

deeply, as He uplifted us, He would manifest His Presence to us more and more, and draw all burdened lives to Him, that they might find rest to their souls.

I believe our Lord is coming very near to us in His love and healing power, and that the Church has a great work to do, in the might of the Holy Spirit, to prepare the way before Him. I think we should do well to realise that the spirit in which the Church should carry on this work of preparation should be the spirit of penitence—sorrowing that we have so long rejected Him as the Saviour of the body, that we have so long limited Him in all the healing that He has longed to give to His suffering ones. Can we say yet that Jesus, Who in wondrous mystery took upon Him our infirmities and bore our sicknesses, has seen of the travail of His soul and has been satisfied with it? We must pray very earnestly that the Church may go forward in the spirit of penitence and of deepest humility.

The faith which the Holy Spirit quickens in the soul is the humble faith of the heart that prays to God and waits, knowing our unworthiness to receive anything from Him. We must guard against that intellectual faith in which the sin of pride lurks—which claims a response from God according to its faith, as though faith were the cause of some mechanical effect, instead of the opening of the heart to receive God's free gift. St. Paul's words

must be a living truth in our hearts: "*By grace* are ye saved, through faith, and this not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Then we must remember in contrite humility that the way of healing is like a broken, long-disused road—it is overgrown with the thorns and briars of our long neglect: it is blocked with the boulders of thoughts and ways of the world that are not the thoughts and ways of God. The bridges of faith have been half broken, the gates of prayer have been too often closed—should we dare to ask or expect our Lord to come in healing and do His mighty works among us, as though the way were made straight before His feet? St. Peter's words to the multitude whose hearts God was opening to receive the message of the Gospel are strikingly applicable to us to-day:

"Repent ye therefore and turn again that your sins may be blotted out: so that there may come seasons of refreshing from the Presence of the Lord, and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus" (Acts iii. 19-20, R. V.).

God grant that the Church may so prepare His way before Him in the power of the Holy Spirit that, "every valley shall be filled and every mountain be brought low: that the crooked may be made straight and the rough places plain," and then may God in His mercy grant to us the gift of His healing, "that all flesh shall see the Salvation of God."

I should like to point out one of the ways in which the Church may prepare Christ's way before Him.

Our Lord has given us the command to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick. There is a close connection between the preaching and the healing, for Christ's message of healing must first be preached, as words of life and power, to prepare the way for the promised healing to follow. The Church has a great work to do in preparation for our Lord's coming to us in healing, by preaching the Gospel as He gave it to us, in the fulness of the good tidings of great joy; that Christ has come and is with us now to heal the broken hearted, to bring "deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind: to set at liberty them that are bruised."

The words have perhaps been familiar to us all our lives, but they have seemed to lack life and reality.

But that they may indeed be preached as words of life and power, they must be in union with our Lord; they must come through us as a message from Christ Himself.

The prophecies of healing in the Old Testament are words of life, because they were waiting and depending upon the Presence of Christ for their fulfilment, and when the fulness of time had come, and our Incarnate Lord was with men, we know that they were literally fulfilled.

So now the promise of healing comes in words of life, because it is Christ's message, and because it depends for its fulfilment upon Christ, who is indeed Emmanuel — God with us.

And when we obediently preach these words of life, they seem to come from Christ, and to penetrate to the very spirit of the man who by the preparation of the Holy Spirit is attuned to receive them. They do not fall on deaf ears, or reach the mind only, but come to the spirit as words of power, because, as our Lord has said: "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (St. John vi. 63).

Do we realise the power of God's Word and His Truth? "The Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow" (Heb. iv. 12).

The preaching of the gospel message of healing is to us a matter of simple obedience, for Christ has entrusted it to us to deliver, and the fulfilling of it rests in His hands; but to many it will be a venture of faith which must be bravely and fearlessly made.

God has said: "As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it

shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah lv. 10, 11). So let us be content to fulfil our mission of bearing the message of healing and leave results to God: only we know that His Word shall not return unto Him void, and the Word of Life may bear fruit in generations to come, even if the conditions of faith in our day are so weak that we are limiting our Lord in His mighty works. But until the Gospel is preached, how can Christ heal the sick?

In the days of our Lord's visible Presence among men those who wanted to help the sick and afflicted would have told them of Christ who had come to heal and to save, and would have brought them in faith to Him, and Christ would have done the work. This is a great part of the Church's work now: to tell the sick of Christ, to preach the Gospel message of healing, and to bring them to Christ who is present with us now. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, and there is no limit to His power and His love. The works that He did then He can and will do now, and He is doing them now, for what I am saying to you to-day, I am saying from a real and practical experience of His doing such works, as in the days of His visible Presence on earth.

It will help us to feel our need of preparation, that by His grace we may be enabled to receive all that He has to give, if we realise

that in spiritual healing we have special contact with the Person of the Lord. There is much to learn from the Gospel accounts of these meetings with Christ that we cannot dwell on now, but we see how the sick came with the real desire for healing, and His desire to heal went out, as it were, to meet them, for His heart was moved with compassion, and He drew forth their prayer of faith, asking: "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?"

Then we see how He dealt with the individual character. He lifted each one to the higher levels of faith to receive the healing, lifted them to the spiritual plane on which alone He can do His mighty works. So now He reads our hearts, and knows what we need and uplifts us in the same way. In these meetings with Christ it was not the body alone that was benefited. Christ laid His hand on the source of the trouble, and His touch brought healing to spirit, soul and body. See how He says to the paralytic man: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and then: "Arise, take up thy couch and go into thy house" (St. Luke v. 20, 24), and to the man healed at the Pool of Bethesda: "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more" (St. John v. 14). Do not misunderstand me here, or think for a moment that I am substituting the spiritual healing for the divinely appointed means by which Christ comes to us in His Church in pardon and grace, means

which are all precious to us. I only want to point out that in the spiritual healing we are meeting with Christ Himself, as did those who could see His face, and that the touch of Christ who "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" may transcend all our longing if only we are open in spirit, soul and body to receive all that He has to give.

To those who approach this subject for the first time, the thought of the personality of the human healer is apt to loom too large. The Apostles felt this strongly, when God had given them grace to heal the man lame from birth in the name of Christ. They protested against any thought of themselves: "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our power or godliness we had made him to walk? The God of our fathers hath glorified His Servant Jesus."

This point should be well in the mind of those to whom is given the task of preparing the sick for healing. It is to our Lord as the Healer that the sick person is to look; it is the faith which is in him that he is to exercise, and pray for its increase. He should be taught, moreover, to look for spiritual as well as bodily healing.

To those who approach in this spirit, it is found that at the time of the healing the spiritual presence makes it impossible to think of

the human channel of healing or the assistants—they are but instruments of the Lord.

And afterwards it is known that the Lord has been working. Indeed, to those who have such faith in Him and have got to know Him as the Healer, it is out of the question to suppose that the fervent prayer is not heard and that the answer is withheld. In what exact way the healing will be shown is not to trouble the mind. Faith in the Lord as the Healer, and in His most certain promises to prayer, brings the certainty that the gift has been received.

If it be said that this is "suggestion," it is at any rate no more suggestion than any teaching of the Christian faith, or than any of our Lord's assertions of the love of God for man and His willingness to give him all good gifts. If it be suggestion, it is that of friend suggesting to a friend the way in which to approach and to receive the Christ. When such suggestion is rightly received, it becomes the living spiritual faith in the person who has welcomed it as truth, which he can and does hold as true.

We carry on our thoughts to picture to ourselves a band of Christians deeply animated with this faith. If their faith and prayer is brought to bear on the sick in whom is the possibility of a kindred faith, would not a great increase of healing power be found? When the four friends brought the paralysed

man to our Lord at Capernaum, we are told that "He saw their faith." Their faith constituted an effective call upon His power. Are we to despair of this condition? There are many in whom such faith can be found.

If community-faith were far stronger and more widely diffused, we can but think that works of healing would be much more seen and much more widely spread. In a world of real Christian faith, the non-healing of disease would be more remarkable than its healing.

There are some characteristics of our Lord's healing which it may be helpful to touch on here, seeing that His ministry now is the same as His ministry in the days of His flesh. His works of healing are a revelation and fulfilment of the Personality of God, because in them we see the Holy Trinity working in Unity, through the Manhood of Jesus Christ. Christ has said: "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doeth these the Son also doeth in like manner" (St. John v. 19, R. V.), and "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The Father abiding in Me doeth His works" (St. John xiv. 10, R. V.). And again, of the co-operation of the Holy Spirit we are told that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, Who went about doing good and healing all that were op-

pressed of the devil, for God was with Him" (Acts x. 38). The works of healing are a manifestation of the love of the Holy Trinity working on the planes of human nature to which God had come in a wonderful way by the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. If we could only realise that those whom Jesus sends forth to follow in His footsteps as channels of His healing, go forth in the power of the Holy Trinity, working through our Lord as the divine means of manifesting God to man, how great should be our faith and our humility. There should be no room for doubt, or thought of any human initiative, when God Himself, the ever Blessed Trinity, is working through us and with us to guide our steps.

Again, our Lord has revealed the ministry of healing to us as being wide as the love of God. There are no limits to the power of Christ. He heals "all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (St. Matt. iv. 23). He heals the sufferer who "has spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any" (St. Luke viii. 43), and who was at that point where we so often lose faith in God to heal. Neither are there any limits to the love of God. We are not told of any who, coming to Christ for healing, were refused. During the three years of His ministry, there was healing for all who sought the Saviour. "And all the multitude sought to touch Him, for power came forth from

Him and healed them all" (St. Luke vi. 19). We see the same all-embracing wideness of God's love and healing in His charge to the disciples. "Into whatsoever city ye enter . . . heal the sick that are therein."

I do not think we shall realise to the full the wideness of God's ministry of healing until we realize and accept our Lord's attitude towards sickness and disease.

There is a simple directness in our Lord's attitude towards sickness and disease, and I think the secret of his strength, resulting from this directness of purpose, is this: He is conscious, as man, of perfect union with God in the work of healing: His Manhood is the channel through which the power of the Holy Trinity wills to flow out, and does flow out, to the multitude which throngs Him, to free them from the powers of evil. The mind of Christ accepts this, and no shadow of doubt clouds the directness of His attitude or the straight course of His mission. He looks upon the diseased and infirm as children to whom He has come to preach deliverance and to bring healing, and His heart is moved with compassion at their condition; He looks upon the disease and infirmity as powers of evil, and it is in overcoming the evil that the works of God are made manifest, and God is glorified. Notice His words with regard to the woman whom He loosed from the "spirit of infirmity": "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of

Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath Day?" (St. Luke xiii. 16).

His attitude towards the fever from which Peter's wife's mother was suffering was one of rebuke.

"He stood over her and rebuked the fever and it left her" (St. Luke iv. 39). Again, He says: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you" (St. Matt. xii. 28).

There can be no doubt that in His ministry of healing, God made manifest in Jesus Christ, was destroying the works of the devil It was a direct conflict with evil.

Again, we never hear of Jesus speaking of the diseased as those whom God hath bound, but "whom Satan hath bound." We could never think of Jesus giving disease to anyone: it would be a horrible, impossible thought: He only gives help and healing—why, then, do we think of disease as coming to us as the direct will of God for us? Christ is the revelation of God, and in all His thoughts and words and deeds He reveals to us the will of God and the nature of God: "I am the Lord that healeth thee."

We must realize that sin is in the world, and that disease and sickness are in the world as its natural consequences. Because God is Love, and the law of love is reigning every-

where, we who are born of God find all peace and happiness in union with God, and obedience to God's laws: and it must follow that disunion and disobedience to God's laws bring their natural consequence of discord, misery and disease. But through all the disease resulting from man's turning away from God, the source of life, we see God working to draw him back to reunion and wholeness, and the life of Jesus Christ is the manifestation of the unchanging love of God, coming down to man's need to bring pardon and healing to all who turn to Him.

He never withholds His healing from those who come to Him to receive it, and when the leper asks the question that is in many hearts to-day: "Lord, if Thou wilt," Christ answers: "I will."

Now if this unclouded faith in the Father's will to heal, and to overcome disease as a power of evil, is the faith of our Lord as the perfect channel of healing, our clouded faith must be a source of weakness in us, and wherever our attitude towards disease differs from that of our Lord, we must be at fault. I think that what the Church needs to-day is to accept our Lord's attitude towards sickness, disease and infirmity: to realise that they are powers of evil, and to fight against them single-heartedly, as He did, and overcome them in the power of God through Jesus Christ.

We have to consider whether on this whole question we are right in affirming that sickness is sent by God. It really appears that it is sent by God just as far as, and no farther than, sin is sent by God. Suppose, it is objected, that disease, following the violation of God's law, is in many cases the natural sequence of sin, we go on to see that sin, further and deeper sin, comes in the same way as the result and sequence of sin. In both cases God allows it to be so, but in neither can we ascribe the sequence to a special order *ad hoc* from God. Certainly a writer in the Apocrypha expressed the Israelite belief, that even death could not rightly be considered God's will for man, for he proclaims: "God made not death" (Wisdom i. 13). No one could deny that very often by the grace of God, the bearing of suffering and pain is made the means of great blessing; death, which began as a curse, is turned into the gate of life. The knowledge in a man of the slavery of sin in himself becomes a means of stirring him up to take hold of the redemption from sin.

Many people find it difficult to reconcile the idea of spiritual healing with a preconceived idea in their minds that suffering and sickness are sent by God, and therefore it is not right to use more than a certain amount of effort to overcome it.

In the first place, it is to be noticed that if suffering is really sent by God, no means

should be used to defeat God's work, no doctor of any sort should be called in. The Shakers are quite logical and consistent in carrying out their belief by refusing to have doctors. Yet we should be horrified if a mother found her child with an artery cut and refused to send for the doctor to tie it up: we should demand that she should be punished by law.

If it is right to use doctors for healing, it must also be right to use spiritual healing, if God has shown us the truth of it.

We must face the fact that the thoughts of the world are not the thoughts of God; that our attitude has too often been that of the multitude who tried to hush the blind man's cries to Christ. While the power of the Lord has been present to heal we have too often reasoned together, like the Pharisees and doctors of the law, instead of coming to Him in simple faith, and Christ, looking upon us, must still be grieved at the hardness of our hearts. We need to come to God in all humility as little children, definitely accepting Christ as He has revealed Himself to us as the Saviour of our spirit, soul and body, desiring earnestly to "forsake our own thoughts" wheresoever they are opposed to His, and to learn of Him. Then Christ will manifest Himself to us, and by the power of the Holy Spirit we shall be changed until this mind is in us, which was also in Christ Jesus (Phil. ii. 5).

The spiritual healing has a message for

those who by patiently suffering for Christ's sake under perhaps some weakening disease, have daily grown nearer to Him. Here we see God bringing good out of evil, for all things work together for good to them that love God; but do not let us lose sight of the fact that the disease is evil, and that the aim of Christ and Christianity is not to accept evil patiently, but patiently to strive for the victory, and in the power of Christ to overcome. Every disease conquered in the name of Christ is a victory won for God, and God is glorified in His Son.

Do not let us doubt that our Lord, in healing, is giving a gift even greater than those we might receive through patient endurance, for the wholeness to which He restores us is not to be an end but a means; it is Christ's perfect condition for the joy of service, that those whom He heals may, like Peter's wife's mother, arise and minister.

We must not necessarily connect disease and affliction directly with our own sin, nor think that those on whom the tower in Siloam fell were sinners above all men. In some cases we see suffering as a direct consequence of sin in a life, and our Lord's words to the man at Bethesda seem to denote some connection between the two, but in the majority of cases the disease comes indirectly as a result of sin and imperfection being in the world, and our Lord clearly says of the blind man:

“Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents” (St. John ix. 3).

Many Christians find a real difficulty in accepting healing from our Lord in the thought of St. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. xii. 7-10). The nature of the trouble is a point on which theologians differ, and we have yet to learn definitely that it was disease. God suffered this conflict to go on, that it might bring to St. Paul that humiliation of spirit which alone could guard him from the snare of spiritual pride. “Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given unto me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet me.” Physical disease may cause humiliation, but to a soul which has been “caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not possible for a man to utter,” could anything bring so deep a humiliation of spirit as the evil suggestions of Satan, whose buffeting other illumined saints of God have experienced?—suggestions that seem to taint the soul and drag it down to the material plane, humbling it in the dust and shutting out the face of God until the spirit longs to rise above the burden of the flesh; but through the darkness God, unseen, is developing in that suffering soul the humility and the purity of Christ. May not this, perhaps, have been the thorn in the flesh? Then, as we study God’s dealings with St. Paul we do not

find, as some would fear, a contradiction or clouding of what we have been learning of His ways, but all is in accord with the nature of God as manifested in the healing works of Jesus Christ. The thorn in the flesh is clearly evil in origin; it is a messenger from Satan, and when St. Paul "besought the Lord thrice that it might depart," God did not turn a deaf ear to his prayers, but He answered them by giving grace to overcome. When St. Paul acknowledges his weakness, God's strength is perfected in him, and the power of Christ rests upon him, and in that strength and power he goes forward to victory, labouring "more abundantly than they all," till in the end he can say "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown . . . , " the crown that our Lord has promised to "him that overcometh." I think the perplexity over this mysterious passage in St. Paul's life has been so real in some minds that it has shut out altogether for a time our Lord's ministry of healing, and people have taken from it a lesson of passive endurance of disease, forgetting that God's grace is sufficient for us to overcome.

If we accept sickness and disease as good when Jesus pronounced them evil, our error must be a grave source of weakness in us, and it is also giving back to Satan a power which our risen Lord has won for all time. "All

power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (St. Matt. xxviii. 18).

The subject of suffering is one too vast to dwell upon at length here, but I should like, if I could, to point out the difference between the suffering caused by sickness and disease and the suffering by which the humanity of our Lord and His followers is perfected. Christ came to bring healing to the sick and diseased and to uplift those who were suffering from the bondage of Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We have yet to learn that our blessed Lord suffered from disease. We cannot think that He could ever be in bondage to Satan; "the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me." Only, as the Sinless One bore the sins of the whole world, so Christ the all-pure took upon Him our infirmities and bore our diseases. Christ's ministry was to deliver humanity from the bondage of sickness, disease and sin, and as He draws us to Him to find forgiveness, so He draws us to Him to find healing, and in the peace of His pardon and healing the suffering is lost in the love of those to whom much has been forgiven.

But now we come to the sufferings of Christ Himself, and though we may never fathom the depth of the agony which He bore, we may learn a little of the nature of that suffering. We are taught that "It became Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all

things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10). What was the essence of the sufferings of Christ? Was it not the rejection of His love by those whom He loved and longed to save? The nature of love is to give; love is ever proceeding forth from the Godhead, and where love sees, as God saw in fallen humanity, need and distress and peril, there the desire of love to give is more than commensurate with the need, and we see it manifested in the breaking forth of the love of God, into the world, even in the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The ministry of Jesus is a manifestation of love outflowing to man's need, and where hearts were shut against Him, and men would not receive His love or realise their need of it, there we see the suffering of the Redeemer.

He wept over Jerusalem, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this *thy* day, the things that belong to thy peace . . ." Did not Christ taste in His agony of Gethsemane the full bitterness of the cup of man's rejection of God—for God had come down to save, and man's rejection came to this, even to nailing the Son of God to the Cross, and in the thirst of His love for man thus rejecting Him lay the travail of His soul and the "unknown sufferings of that amazing sacrifice."

Our Lord on Calvary was suffering in spirit, soul and body, the greatest suffering love can ever feel—and which only love can feel—even rejection by those whom only He could save.

And in this suffering every Christian who longs to be filled with the divine love, has a share, to fill up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ. This is not the suffering from bondage to Satan, from which Christ uplifts us, but it is a share in the Cross of Christ, and as long as there is in the world the spirit that rejects God, so long will all in whom Christ's spirit dwells suffer in that rejection. In following in the footsteps of our blessed Lord we go through Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha, for it is only through suffering that we can be made perfect. St. Paul shared this suffering. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you."

I think that we as Churchmen ought to ponder seriously the thought that in withholding the ministry of healing from those whom Christ came to heal, we are rejecting the love of God, and crucifying afresh the Lord of Glory. Those to whom God has entrusted the gift of healing know that our Lord desires to work through them, and that His love should flow out through them, and if they limit Him they are nailing back those Hands outstretched to bless, and those Feet swift to go

on errands of healing, and piercing that Heart that cannot cease to give out love. The love of God is not a sentiment but the one truth of the universe. And as the call of the healing Saviour comes to individuals, so it comes now to His Church as a whole and we must see that in our generation we are faithful to our trust. The Ante-Nicene Church was a healing Church. Will the same be said of the Church in the twentieth century, or will Christ be among us as our Healer still despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with disease?

There are some who fear the dangers of this movement in the Church. Should we not fear rather to reject our Lord as He has revealed Himself to us? We know that the nearer the soul comes to God, the harder grows the conflict with evil, and so the closer the Bride of Christ draws to the Bridegroom, the sterner will be the conflict with principalities and powers.

Those whom God sends forth in the power of the Holy Spirit are impelled to go forward. The same Spirit that drove our blessed Lord into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil is guiding our Church, and we must trust in Him to keep us from the dangers. We must take God into our confidence, and His strength will be made perfect in weakness.

The question sometimes arises: What will death be, if Christ is doing His mighty works

among the faithful? As we think of death now, we think of many souls passing to God in the agonies of some terrible disease, but when Christ has put disease under His feet will not death be the call to the soul at God's appointed time to go up higher?

In the realm of nature where there is little or no resistance to God's working, the autumn leaf and the ripe fruit drop gently down in the fulness of time, and a healing touch has been laid on the branch from which it almost imperceptibly falls. Will it not be so with us, and will not death be the peaceful passing of the longing, waiting soul into the nearer presence of God, which the words picture to us? "Blessed in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Let us consider now what healing is, and what is the true principle of healing which is working universally as God's law on the spiritual, mental and physical planes of man's being.

I think that healing is a power of the mystery we call life which proceeds from God, and that the principle of healing is this power of the life of God working through varied channels according to the different planes, to quicken the life and healing power that is in man.

God has breathed into man the breath of life, and this life is an active, living force within us; but the life within needs and re-

ceives continual sustenance from God, both directly and also through means which He has ordained, for God is our life and in Him we live, and move and have our being.

Man's being is threefold: body, soul and spirit. The life which God has given us is working in each part of our being, manifested in each in higher degree: but that we may fulfil God's ideal for us and be channels of His life to the world, we need to receive from Him a continuous influx of life to develop all that is within us and enable us to minister to others in whatever way He has called us to do so. Many are receptive to God in spirit, some are receptive to God to fill the powers of the soul, but we all ought to be more directly receptive to God in body, and to realise more deeply our need of Him and His desire to impart more life to us.

God teaches us the lesson of the constant dependence of the life within us, upon that which is without, by our daily need of light, air, and food to sustain the material life. These are means which God uses to give a new influx of life to man through the physical plane: and we know that as our bodies and also our minds have their daily needs and dependence upon outside things, so our souls are in continual dependence upon the grace of God.

Because the human race has fallen, and there is sin in the world, there is also as its consequence much disease, infirmity, and

weakness. Yet the very need of fallen humanity has called for a fresh manifestation of the love of God, for it is as though the white light of the life of God, meeting man's physical suffering, was refracted into the rainbow rays of healing and life. These, coming down to quicken the life that is in man, developed in that life a corresponding healing power, for the *vis medicatrix naturae*, the mystery of life within us, is an active dynamic force that cooperates with the life and healing power of God to militate against disease and to cast it out, to repair that which is injured and to strengthen that which is weak.

Whenever, through weakness or disease, our vitality is low, the healing force within us needs to be stirred into activity by God's healing power. It is a silent and very wonderful witness to God's love towards us that on every plane on which He manifests His life, in ever-higher degree, there He also manifests His healing power in ever-increasing measure. We see a manifestation of His life in the rocks and stones, where it seems to slumber, but yet is never still: again we see it unfolding in the plants and trees, revealed in instinct in the animals, and in consciousness and intelligence in man. Then we come to the highest manifestation of all, and in Christ we find — God Himself.

In the same ascending scale we find God's healing power, hidden in material things. He

has put healing virtue into minerals and sulphurous springs, in herbs, in light, in heat, in electricity, and perhaps other forces whose secrets are yet undiscovered. When we come to man, we realize that the understanding and skill that can find out and apply these forces are gifts of God; but above and beyond this man is able to receive healing power from God, and to transmit it to others: for those whom God has chosen to be stewards of this mystery, to whom He has entrusted the gift of healing, are channels through which Christ's power flows.

Then we come to Christ, and in Christ we find life itself. In the union of His humanity and His divinity we see the union of life, for the life which God breathed into man is united with God the Source of Life. We see the healing power of Christ working, as we have said, in Nature and in man, "for without Him was not anything made that was made," but in His own personality Christ gathers up all healing in Himself, for He is the Lord of life. One touch from Him, one look or word—even the unconscious contact with those who seek to touch the hem of His garment, suffices to send the healing power through the sufferer and he is made perfectly whole.

In all these ways we see God's healing power coming to quicken the life that is in man, and we must remember that whatever be the means through which the healing comes, it is

God alone who heals. If we realize that all healing is the work of God, we shall be conscious of the spirit of unity underlying all efforts to bring healing to humanity, for all are co-operating with God, and perhaps the realization will lead us to work more unitedly than we have hitherto done for the benefit of the suffering, until our work is uplifted to the highest plane, for it is only by coming to Christ Himself that we can hope to find perfect wholeness for the human race.

When we speak of spiritual healing as the highest kind of healing, we do not want to do away with the means God has provided on the mental and physical planes. We whole-heartedly acknowledge these as gifts of God, and see God working through them. We must remember that God is dealing with a very large body of people, and that all are not able to receive His healing in the same way. Because we may not be ready to come direct to Christ for spiritual healing, God does not say He will give us nothing; but in His love and tender care He comes in healing to us as we are able to receive it. Think how terrible the result would be if we were to shut up the hospitals and do away with all medicine and stop the work of doctors. It would be like taking away the crutches from a lame man before his muscles were able to support him. If the mind is in us that was also in Jesus Christ, we shall minister to others as they are able to

receive the ministry, and from God's dealings with us to learn to deal with our brethren.

Now I come to a point that I want to bring out very clearly: and that is that all the work of healing that is done on the mental and physical planes, unless a spiritual force be brought into it, is limited to those planes by the universal law that nothing can rise above its source.

When we are seeking healing for our bodies alone, and from material means alone, though it is God who is working, we are limiting His influence to the physical plane, because we are not open to receive anything higher from Him; we are not expecting anything higher. A drug may benefit the physical, but the doctor who administers it would never claim that it would reach the spiritual part of man's nature. Magnetic healing is a natural gift of God, and this, too, rests on the physical plane. The same law applies to mental healing, the principle of which is now being recognized and used by many of the medical faculty. Its working is upon the mental plane, and through the mental, effects are produced upon the physical, but it cannot rise to the spiritual plane without a spiritual force behind it. Mental healing demands some power of conscious co-operation. It works, as it were, by self-suggestion; it is subjective, and thus cannot affect those cases most needing it, where the personality itself is affected, the mind de-

ranged, the will paralysed, and the mental faculties obscured. We come to the conclusion, therefore, that the results of healing by natural powers can be no higher than natural; or in other words, we are limiting God's healing to the physical and mental planes, and the spirit is left untouched. These means can be used apart from belief in God and without dependence on Him, so that the results which are often really obtained are only natural, and leave the person no higher than they found him. They may even be the foundation of fresh unbelief.

True spiritual healing, as we have seen, seems to have effect on the whole physical as well as the moral and spiritual nature, because it is healing through the complete divine humanity of our Lord, which cleanses from all sin, with a view to perfect soundness in the presence of God and man. Natural healing deals with both cause and effect only when the cause is in the physical constitution; spiritual healing can deal with the cause when it lies deeper in the moral and spiritual weakness and wrong-doing.

Though I have shown that the work done solely on the mental and physical planes can only have natural results, yet we must remember that the spiritual force may be brought into all this work to uplift and spiritualize it, and that then indeed the spirit is reached, and God's work is no longer limited to the natural

planes. We cannot doubt that through the faith and prayers and the devoted lives of many doctors and nurses, as well as through the means they are using, God comes in healing to those to whom they minister. We cannot draw a line between natural and spiritual healing, nor would we, for there is but one healing, since all healing comes from God.

Now I would ask you to consider for a moment the condition of humanity, especially in our large cities, and think what is being done to alleviate that condition, and what results we have to show. We see a vast organization striving after the Christian ideal of perfect soundness: there are the hospitals, and homes, asylums, reformatories, prisons, etc., and there is the Church brooding over all. Then we ask ourselves, are diseases being stamped out and is there less sickness in the world? What have we to say with respect to the moral and spiritual conditions? Is the percentage of crime and lunacy less? And if we cannot answer these questions satisfactorily, where does the fault lie? I do not propose to deal with these questions statistically nor am I qualified to do so, but I think we should all acknowledge that there is a terrible amount of suffering, disease, intemperance and lunacy in the world, and that although a great work is going on, yet we must admit our limitations. God is working with us, but does not the fault lie in this—that we are limiting His work to

the physical and mental planes, and that when we reach the limit of what human aid can do in co-operation with God, we give up in despair and accept our limitations?

We see physical suffering that we cannot help. There are diseases, like cancer, that seem to baffle the most intense scientific research after a cure. We see the troubled lives of the lunatic, and the wasted lives of the deficient, and we find men and women chained by evil habits and oppressed by the powers of darkness.

How can we rise above our present limitations, and what can we do for sinful, suffering and oppressed humanity?

There is only one way. We must come to Christ, our Saviour and Deliverer: we must bring humanity to Christ, Who was and is all that humanity needs.

In questions of sickness and suffering we are faced everywhere with the thought of heredity. It is impossible to doubt that a very large proportion of moral and physical evil may be traced to that source. In many this knowledge breeds a hopeless fatalism: in the Christian it should breed a conviction that the Lord has means of dealing with a man to remove the disabilities under which he groans. When through the Incarnation He came into the human nature, He came as the second founder of the human race, the author of a new humanity. He initiated a new heredity

of grace which can conquer the old heredity of sin and disease. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The Christian surely must believe that all the power of this new creation is ready at hand, through the appointed channels. He does not think that grace works on him apart from his own will; he knows that all real improvement must come through the medium of his will.

The promise is to him that overcomes. He must fight, therefore, against the inroads of sin; he must fight against the inroads of disease, but the fight means to the man of real faith the assurance of triumph, because it is the Lord of boundless power who is working in and with his will.

Our Lord's question: "Wilt thou be made whole?" very clearly implies that the will to put away sickness is needed in order that His power may have its due effect. The cutting off of the entail of disease and sin should be the firm expectation of the Christian life. The cutting off of the entail of sin—what hope for the human race, if the Lord wills to do this through His Church. Too often we start a fresh entail of sin and leave a dire inheritance behind us. This cannot be God's will; it is inconsistent with the mission of the Saviour. The idea of the possibility of destroying the taint of heredity is in accordance with the revelation of Him as the Saviour.

There are many convincing signs, attested

by persons of undoubted faith and understanding, who are willing and anxious to bear witness of what they know, that this power of healing is real and in Christ. Now comes the question, whether those responsible for the guidance of the Church's action are to accept their evidence or not. If they find this evidence to be credible, the matter cannot be left as a matter of merely individual concern, with the danger which always belongs to mere private judgment on matters of the faith. We ask that our Fathers in God should recognize the use of this power as a God-given gift, to be used with all due safeguards for the blessing of the faithful in the name of the Lord. We have not to do in this matter with those outside the pale of life in the Incarnate Son of God, but it is a matter which belongs essentially to the full manifestation of that life in Christ.

This question is continually coming up. Should not the Church be doing this work which belongs to her proper sphere? By what authority does she ignore this side of her ministry? Why are we to say that the power of healing in the name of the Lord has ceased? If it has not ceased it must be recognized, or we are losing a great part of the power of our Divine Lord. Does not the leakage into "Christian Science," which cannot be denied, point to the neglect of this truth?

It has been well said that healing is the right hand of the Church: those to whom the

truth of this has been revealed are willing to use all effort and prayer to restore it to its place in the Church of God.

I earnestly believe that this awakening to the truth of Christ's presence and healing power is a movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church. The "rushing, mighty wind" of God is with us, and we cannot tell "whither it goeth," nor how wonderfully God's plan will develop, filling our whole being with His life, drawing souls to Him, and bringing Christ to the heathen "with healing in His wings." But that God's kingdom may come, we must pray most earnestly that His will may be done in earth *as it is in Heaven* — that is, that the Holy Spirit may fill us and work in us for the accomplishing of His designs. God is calling us to a work that no human power can do; only the Holy Spirit can do it, and we can only offer to God our spirits, souls and bodies, as channels, emptied of self by the power of the Cross of Christ, that He may uplift our whole being and use it. The Church must offer to God this whole movement, because of ourselves we can do nothing, and must pray that the Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts. We need this sorely, that no human initiative, no self-activity may resist God's working, and this prayer will be a prayer offered in union with God, and will assuredly be answered.

In conclusion, I want to point out the great

responsibility of bringing the truth of Christ's healing before the world from the standpoint of Christ. It rests with the Church to teach Christ the Son of God as the Lord of life and the Fount of healing, to spirit, soul and body, and to bring the sick and oppressed and sinful and sorrowful to Him.

Many people are approaching this subject from the mental side. We acknowledge wholeheartedly the value of scientific researches in the field of psychology and mental therapeutics: they are revealing laws through which Christ is working. But "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit," and human reason cannot find Christ: only Christ can so touch the spirit of man and illumine the human reason consecrated to Him, that that man will see God working through all the laws which scientific research manifest to us. We find that many people are seeking the way to spiritual healing, and the Church can teach them that Christ Himself is the Way. Let us first accept our Lord as the Saviour of spirit, soul and body, and all the rest will be added unto us.

Christ is the Way, and Christ Himself is the Truth. The love of our healing Saviour for the world is waking a response in the desire for healing that is in many hearts to-day. This desire is impelling men to search for the truth of the healing, and God is rewarding those who are seeking with their minds in the

various fields of thought, with the revelation of truths of His workings. But we need more than that: "Our heart is restless until it finds rest in Thee." We must seek God, not with the mind only, but in spirit, and then we shall find Christ, the source of healing, and in Christ all truths are gathered up, for He is the Truth.

I believe that God has a message of healing to the Church at this time—a charge to the Church to reveal to all seekers after healing that it is in Christ Himself, and only in Christ that we shall find the way, the truth and the life. If the Church will do this faithfully, in the simplicity of our blessed Lord's "gospel to the poor," we cannot tell what wonderful revelations of the divine love and power may be made by the Holy Spirit, nor can we fathom all that lies hidden in the "unsearchable riches of Christ." Little by little we are learning, but God has much to teach us from the revelation of Himself in the life of Jesus Christ. Our Lord said to His disciples: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you unto all truth . . . He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you" (St. John xvi. 12-14). "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10).

Christ is the life, and He, who came to give

life, and to give it more abundantly, is indeed with us now, and the work that is going on bears witness to the power of His healing presence. It may help some to realize how true and real is the healing power of Christ—the healing virtue which flows out from Him to the sick through the laying on of hands with prayer—if I say, with humble thankfulness, that people, suffering from many and various diseases, both nervous and organic, such as cancer, paralysis, locomotor ataxy, internal ulceration, growths, colitis and many other troubles, coming in faith to Christ, have received from Him healing and cleansing in spirit, soul and body. Experience leads me further to believe firmly in obsession, and in the power of Christ to cast out evil spirits and set free those whom Satan has bound. I should like to mention two cases to show how great an opportunity the Church has in carrying on the ministry of healing.

The first is that of a little child, who had an evil, uncontrolled temper. In answer to prayer and the command to the evil spirit to depart in the name of our Lord, it was cast out, and the healing of that little child led to the conversion and baptism of the father and mother.

The second is that of a woman who was intemperate. She was obsessed by a spirit of drink, and her home and children were terribly neglected. The saving power of Christ

prevailed, and the spirit was cast out and left her immediately. She seemed to be a changed woman, and during the three years that have passed since then she has never again been intemperate, but is a good wife and mother. On being questioned as to why she had pursued that evil course, she said: "I could not help it. There seemed to be something that dragged me into those places and made me drink."

There are many poor souls, oppressed by Satan to-day, and sorely needing the Church's ministry: they must be brought to Christ, who alone can save them. Our Saviour took "the lowest place," "the very scorn of men and the outcast of the people" that He might uplift, and save even the most degraded. There is hope for all; and though the powers of evil seem so strong, God has promised that "when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him."

May I leave with you one last thought, a doctrinal truth, containing an intensity of meaning to the human race?

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God is Man, and in His perfect humanity in glory at the Right Hand of the Father God sees the totality of humanity, the perfecting in spirit, soul and body, of every nation and every individual. The love of God is proceeding forth to us in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,

through the perfect humanity of our Blessed Lord, for the perfecting of the human race, that when He shall appear we may be like Him. And to humanity God has given through the Church His Holy Spirit, and the fervent desire of the Indwelling Spirit after the perfection of Christ in spirit, soul and body is always reaching out to meet the desire of God's love for us.

Is it not through the longing of God for man, and in the longing of the Indwelling Spirit in man for God that we shall attain, through Jesus Christ, to the reunion of humanity with God, and by striving onwards through time shall find in Eternity the fulfilment of our Lord's prayer—

“That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us . . . I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in One” (St. John xvii. 21, 23).

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

Jesus—the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.

**He speaks ; and listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.**

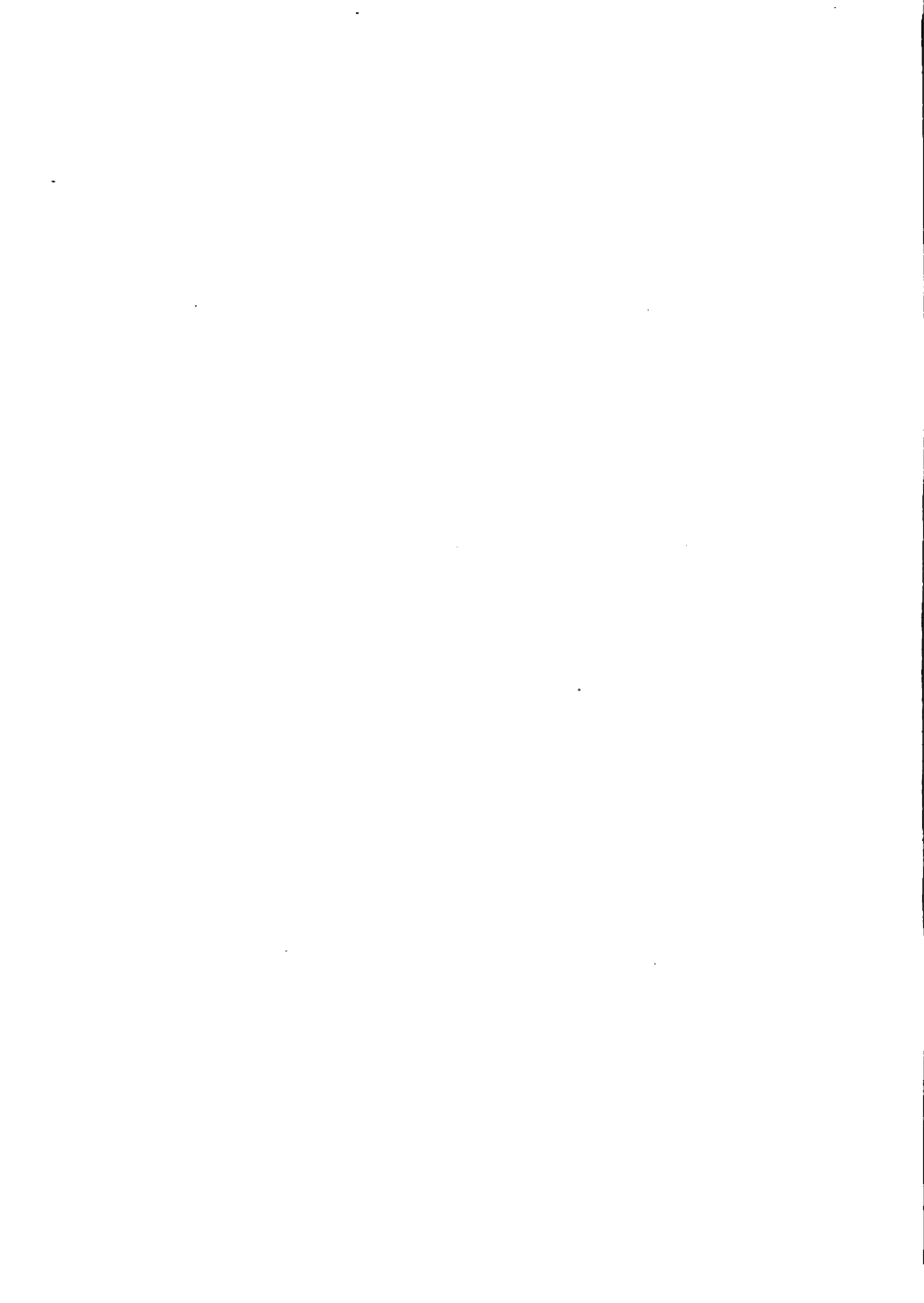
Hear Him, ye deaf ; His praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ ;
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come ;
And leap, ye lame, for joy ;

My gracious Master, and my God,
Assist me to proclaim
And spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Thy Name.

Prayer

O God our Heavenly Father, we pray for Thy blessing upon the Christian Healing Mission. Bless, protect and guide those who have gone forth in the name of Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. May all that they do be directed and governed by Thee. May they be so filled with the Spirit of Christ that they may be bearers of His Light to those who sit in darkness, for the setting at liberty of souls whom Satan hath bound, and for the healing of all who are sick and suffering in mind and body. And we ask that they and all who are linked with them in prayer at home may be ever united in Thy Love, and protected from every snare of the enemy, so that by Thy Grace Thy purposes may be fulfilled to the Glory of Thy Holy Name; for Jesus' Sake. Amen.







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